

all backgrounds thanking them for providing for them the soundtrack of their lives. And God, humor, the comedians of old, I remember sneaking into balconies—in my house—and watching over the balcony my dad, quietly not thinking his children were listening, put on records by Richard Pryor, whose humor helped to heal his troubled heart, make him laugh at the absurdities of a nation that still had not fully fulfilled itself.

And so I bring this thought and this heart to say thank you to artists, thank you to this institution for what we did in a bipartisan way to make sure we were funding the venues of this country, the stages where so many artists were able to continue to work during the pandemic. We fund the arts. It is funding that often has to be pushed or fought for, but I say it is the funding that in many ways helps to sustain and source the soul of a nation because without art, we would have lost our way a long time ago.

Now, this week I had this moment where you have just got to pinch yourself, and I know that the Presiding Officer has had this moment, too, where you get this call from White House staff, and they say: Hey, we have got some extra seats in the President of the United States' box at the Kennedy Center to come see a performance by a group called Freestyle Love Supreme.

And I said no immediately. I am so busy. I have got so much work. I had a night that was ending relatively early. But my staff said to me, you know, a guy, Chris Jackson—he was George Washington in “Hamilton”—is going to be there as well, and I had gotten to know him because he was so generous. I saw him in “In The Heights.” He invited me backstage, gave me such love. I saw him in “Hamilton.” Even when I had someone I was trying to date with me, he made me seem special in her eyes. I will never forget that. He was a good wingman.

So I went to go see them perform, and I was just blown away by the performance. I hope that while they are here, people get a chance to go. But what blew me away was how they reaffirmed that message to me. At a time that I am troubled with what is happening in our life, with decisions in the Supreme Court, with challenges, with the economy, they touched on a lot of those issues with humor and artistic genius, and I found my spirit being lifted. I found camaraderie with strangers.

You see a whole crowd of people being pulled together around ideals of empathy and love and affirmation of our most core, cherished values as a nation, like freedom and protest.

I am honored that this group is visiting the U.S. Senate right now—for many, their first time being in this sacred space, this hallowed Hall—to get a chance to witness what we do every day.

And I just want to say thank you to them, and I want to give tribute to all of the artists in America who do so

much for the soul of this Nation and inspire us every day not to stop believing in tomorrows that can be better than what we have in the present.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

NOMINATION OF MARY T. BOYLE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise in support today of Mary Boyle, the nominee to serve as Commissioner at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Mary will bring to this role more than a decade of experience on the Consumer Product Safety Commission, where she previously served as general counsel and currently serves as the Executive Director. She is deeply knowledgeable about consumer product safety and the functioning of the CPSC. I have every confidence that she will be ready to lead on day one.

But it is not just her professional background that makes her perfect for this role. As a mom who raised three kids, she knows firsthand how important it is for parents to be able to trust the products they use every day. She understands the stakes and the devastating consequences of unsafe products.

Just yesterday, the Commerce Committee took an important step forward toward protecting kids and infants by passing the STURDY Act, which will prevent harmful and ultimately heart-breaking furniture tip-overs. Senators CASEY and BLUMENTHAL and I have been working on this for quite a while. It resulted in the largest furniture recall ever in the history of America with IKEA. But we need standards in place across the board. I know that we can count on Mary to be another critical partner in preventing unsafe products from hurting our kids.

Mary is clear-eyed about the responsibility of the CPSC. In her words, it provides a safety net for the public, and in order to carry out that crucial task, it needs a full roster of Commissioners. Currently, four of the five slots are filled. To truly address pressing product safety issues, we have to fill that fifth seat. We can't afford to play politics here. This is about everything from the hazards posed by crib bumper pads to the use of toxic chemicals in everyday consumer products.

I got involved in this way, way back before I was a Senator, when we had a young child swallow a charm that he got with a pair of tennis shoes. It was a giveaway. He didn't die because he choked on that charm; he died over a period of days because the lead in that charm, which was from a foreign country, got into his system, and he died in just a few days. That is how I got involved in the lead standards on foreign toys, that is how I started working with the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and that is when I saw the difference it can make.

We passed a bipartisan bill named after Jim Baker's granddaughter—the Virginia Graeme Baker pool safety

bill—after a young kid named Abigail Taylor in Minnesota was in a kiddie swimming pool and her intestines were ripped out just sitting in the pool because there were so many faulty drains in this country.

I went and visited her in the hospital, and she said: I don't want this to happen to any other kid.

She lived for a year, and during that time, we worked together.

Then Ted Stevens and I passed a much stronger pool safety bill. And I know that the last time I heard testimony from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, over a period of a decade, after we lost a number of kids every year, not one kid had died because of a simple change to how the pool drains worked. That is what the Consumer Product Safety Commission can do at its best—make sure it doesn't happen to any other kid again.

The American people are counting on us to get this right, and with Mary, we have the opportunity to do just that.

As Mary said in her testimony, consumers need to be able to go about their daily lives without worrying that products they interact with every day—washing machines, cell phones, batteries, toys, and treadmills, to name just a few—do not injure, maim, or kill them. Throughout her impressive career, Mary Boyle has shown that she is wholeheartedly dedicated to that mission.

I am voting in support of her, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1787.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, the State Antitrust Enforcement Venue Act is a much needed reform that would put State attorneys general bringing antitrust suits under the Federal antitrust law on equal footing alongside Federal antitrust enforcement personnel by allowing them to avoid consolidation with private antitrust suits.

This would shield these important antitrust actions from the inefficiencies of coordinating their litigation with their slower moving counterparts brought by private litigants, and it would also respect our federalist system of government and recognize the unique and essential role that States play specifically in enforcing our antitrust laws.

No doubt, this is exactly why this bill is supported by 45 State attorneys general, including Utah, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Texas, California, Vermont, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Delaware, Nebraska, Connecticut, Missouri, Hawaii, New Jersey, Arkansas, Louisiana, and North Carolina, representing the home States of almost every member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

My own reasons for introducing the legislation are simple. States are sovereign entities, and they are entitled to

pursue law enforcement actions in defense of their citizens in the venue and in the manner they think best, period.

Allowing State antitrust enforcement actions to be consolidated with private lawsuits not only impinges upon State sovereignty, it also needlessly delays consumer redress for antitrust harm.

For example, the case brought by 16 States in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico alleging that Google's conduct in digital advertising has violated Federal antitrust laws was transferred from Texas, where that lawsuit was originally filed, to the Southern District of New York to be consolidated with other cases. The transfer was ordered in August of last year. Some 9 months later, discovery is still stayed, and no progress has been made. Had the case just remained in Texas, discovery would be well underway, and the trial was scheduled for next summer. Instead, the case is languishing, and potential remedies to consumer harm are being postponed. Google's delay tactics have been successful.

We must eliminate this loophole—a loophole that allows monopolists to delay antitrust enforcement actions brought by State attorneys general. I therefore urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

So, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 261, S. 1787. I further ask that the Lee amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, reserving the right to object, my friend and colleague Senator LEE is well aware that I am supportive of this bill. We worked together. I am a lead Democrat on this bill to get it through the committee.

I simply believe that this bill must go hand in hand with another bill that would look at this issue in a much bigger way; that, yes, this is about allowing State attorneys general to do their jobs and enforce the law, and that is why he and I have joined forces on this bill. But it is also about putting some rules of the road in place on a Federal basis.

We are very close to having a vote on Senator GRASSLEY's and my bill, with a broad range of authors and support, which would be the only and first Federal competition response to tech monopolies since the advent of the internet.

I have been watching this movie for way too long. We have hearings, we throw popcorn at CEOs, we get sound bites on TV, but we don't do anything on a Federal basis. We had the Facebook whistleblower come forward, tell of the horror, the American people

are with us, and we dither and do nothing. This is actually the first time that we have a coalition across the aisle of people who are ready to move forward on a Federal response.

So my view of this is that, as we work to get our enforcers more funds—that is a part of it; Senator GRASSLEY and I have a merger fee bill that is moving as part of the competition bill, which is currently in conference committee—and as we work on Senator LEE's very worthy legislation to focus on allowing the State attorneys general to keep their cases in their own jurisdictions, we simply cannot pretend that we don't have some role in this.

If Members don't know about it, maybe they have talked to one of the 2,700 lobbyists whom the tech companies have hired or maybe they have been subject to the \$70 million effort on the Federal level. And this is not Senator LEE that I am talking about; he is a true maverick and is willing to take on special interests. But what I believe is going on in this building is that there are a lot of people trying to wait this one out and hope we don't have a vote on this bill.

I appreciate Senator SCHUMER working with me and leadership on the Democratic and Republican sides of the Judiciary Committee to make sure that we get this vote.

So Senator LEE will have a vote on this bill. I would certainly not concede at this moment giving tech something they want in this bill when we can't even have a vote on the Federal legislation, but we will have a vote on Senator LEE's bill. I just believe they have to go hand in hand.

I think he is well aware of Senators doing all kinds of things procedurally to be able to get votes, but I think it is really important that we don't have a State-only approach when it comes to what is going on with tech.

To again remind my colleagues and those watching this, what our bill—this big, bipartisan, important bill—does, it doesn't tear apart the company. It doesn't even take on the fact that they are all monopolies—and they are monopolies. Google has a 90-percent market share. Apple and Google basically, when it comes to app stores, are duopolies in dominating the market.

While Europe is set to vote on their own digital market bill on Monday and move this ahead—I was just speaking with them—while Australia has taken on the issue of the news organizations, while Great Britain is moving ahead, we sit back. It is time to at least take on one issue.

As the Justice Department looks at what is a monopoly, is it a monopoly when you have 90 percent market share? The very least we can do is put some rules of the road in place.

What Senator GRASSLEY's and my bill does—and we have taken several comments from Members and made changes to that bill—what the bill simply does is it says: Hey, monopolies or

gatekeeper companies, if you own your own companies—which they are increasingly doing—you can't use your monopoly status to self-preference your own products in front of other products.

No. 2, you can't copy nonpublic data that you have because of the virtue of the fact that you are the gatekeeper and then rip it off and make your own products. That is exactly what Amazon did, as the Wall Street Journal reported, with a four-employee luggage organizer firm when they gave them the data. The next thing you know, it shows up on Amazon Basics.

The third thing you can't do is make companies, small businesses, buy a bunch of stuff just to put yourself at the top of the platform.

The American people are with us on this, poll after poll, including a poll that Google accidentally—accidentally—put out there before they were able to pull it back that showed 68 percent of people want to use the antitrust laws—68 percent of people in their own polling—to be able to rein in this problem.

This is a uniquely American approach, but it must be done hand in hand with State enforcement.

So, all I am asking my friend and colleague to do here—and we wouldn't be here if we could have reached an agreement on this—is, I will assure him that we will have a vote on his bill; but we must also have a vote and finally move ahead on what is only a slice of what we could be doing.

We are not doing some of the things I would want to do, which is look back at some of these mergers, which is actually take that email that Mark Zuckerberg wrote that said I'd rather "buy than compete" and look at what they bought in their zest to be able to avoid competition. Right now, that is going on with the Justice Department and the FTC. But we are simply trying to set some rules of the road, and it is more than overdue after an 8-month investigation in the House of Representatives—an 8-month investigation.

What Federal bills have we passed that would put any checks and balances on these companies? They just keep getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And I am so pleased that some of the State attorneys general are taking this on.

I am eager to get Senator LEE's bill and my bill up for a vote, but it will come close to when the vote on the actual Federal rules takes place. For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I appreciate the insight and the enthusiasm for antitrust law and even for this legislation that has been expressed by my friend and distinguished colleague, the Senator from Minnesota. She and I have been partners on a number of things, including the fact that we have alternated back and forth as the chair

and ranking member of the Antitrust Subcommittee in the Senate for over a decade now.

As she mentioned, she is the lead cosponsor with me on this bill. We have worked together on it.

Look: I agree completely that we need to hold Big Tech accountable under antitrust laws. If you want to hold Big Tech accountable, pass this bill. Pass this bill today. There is not a reason to delay.

No, I understand and appreciate her desire to pass the Klobuchar-Grassley bill. I get that. It is a different proposal. It is not inconsistent with this one. There is no reason why this one couldn't pass and still allow the other one to move forward, nor is there any reason why this measure becoming law would, in any way, undermine that legislation or that legislative proposal.

As to reaching a deal or not reaching a deal, we have been in conversations with the office of Senator KLOBUCHAR for months—literally, months—about it. We talked about different strategies for making sure that we could get it passed—what might have to change. We both discussed the fact that we preferred to keep the bill intact with the retroactivity provisions in there, but, if necessary, we could remove the retroactivity provisions if, by so doing, we could get it past the hotline. All of that has been done in consultation with the office of the Senator from Minnesota for months—literally months. So none of this is a surprise. This was done in tandem with Senator KLOBUCHAR's office.

Finally, I feel the need to push back against the notion that whenever something bigger could happen, nothing smaller in that area may be allowed to pass prior to that. This is a discreet, very specific fix to antitrust law that is desperately needed—urgently needed in order to hold Big Tech accountable under our antitrust laws. There is no good reason to delay this, and it is unfortunate today that we can't do that. I least expected it from the lead cosponsor of the legislation.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Again, I look forward to working with Senator LEE to pass this bill, and I also look forward to passing a bill on the Federal basis and not just deciding that this should be in the province of 50 different States, and I thoroughly plan to work with him to pass this bill, and I hope it will be soon.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 631

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, I rise today out of a desire to protect the

rights and the health of the young men and women who serve the Senate as pages.

I think we could all agree that the Senate wouldn't function well without pages. The very first Senate page was a 9-year-old boy named Grafton Hanson. He was appointed by Daniel Webster in 1829. In those days, the pages' jobs were to refill the inkwells and clean out spittoons. Fortunately, things have improved a bit for the pages. The work isn't quite as messy anymore, but it is still a high-pressure job for a high school student.

When I was here on the floor voting last week, I noticed that the pages were all wearing masks, but none of my colleagues were. I threatened to come to the floor to seek unanimous consent to end the mask mandate, and the next day, the mandate ended. Coincidence? Perhaps.

The new policy states, though, that the mask-wearing will become optional for pages who test negative. But once again, we see the masks on the floor.

I urge my colleagues to look around. The pages are still wearing masks. The COVID policy for the Senate pages requires the reinstitution of a mask mandate if they have supposedly been exposed.

Apparently, there are rules for the pages of the Senate, but not for the President of the Senate, KAMALA HARRIS. When Vice President HARRIS was deemed potentially exposed to COVID, she not only presided over the Senate's confirmation vote of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, but was also seen at the White House with the President, the First Lady, and the Justice without a mask. Rules for thee but not for me.

Jen Psaki justified the Vice President's violation of the COVID guidelines by stating that it was an emotional day. I guess if you are feeling like it is an emotional day then you can do what you please, unless you are a page. The impressive thing about that absurd defense was that Psaki was able to say it with a straight—and maskless—face.

But an unseasoned mask mandate is not all that is required of the pages. According to the guidelines: "All pages are required to be fully vaccinated; if their initial vaccination series was completed at least five months ago, pages are required to obtain [a] booster [shot]" to participate in the Page Program.

From day one, our country's response to this pandemic has made the comfortable more comfortable, while the working class or kids or people with no power have to keep on working but have to obey rules that the adults don't have to themselves.

Now in the halls of Congress we have created a privileged class that can choose whether to get vaccinated and an underclass that has to abide by dictate. It makes absolutely no sense to mandate COVID vaccinations for teenagers who are healthy. It makes even

less sense to mandate a booster. There is no scientific evidence that boosters are valuable, and there is scientific evidence that boosters increase the risk of a heart inflammation for young adolescent males.

A study published last month in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Cardiology* examined over 23 million people ages 12 and up across Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. It concluded that the risk of myocarditis, an inflation of the heart, "was more pronounced" after a second mRNA vaccine dose, "and the risk was highest among males aged 16 to 24 years."

This is exactly why several European countries, including Germany, France, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, all restrict the use of mRNA vaccines for COVID—particularly for adolescents, particularly for adolescent males. The policy of our pages does not address this issue at all and blindly commands boosters.

In fact, if you read the policy, you could imagine an endless stream of boosters. Every 5 months that you haven't had another vaccine you would be required to get a booster.

Last fall, the director and deputy director at the FDA's Office of Vaccines Research and Review both resigned. Realize who these people are. They are on the vaccine committee. They are pro-vaccine. Both of them are actually pro-vaccine mandate. Yet, they resigned from the Government, as reported, "citing White House pressure to approve third doses for all adults and writing damning op-ed's critical of the FDA's subsequent decision to do so."

It became a political decision. The committee voted against extending boosters to kids, and then it was overruled by politicians at the White House. These two researchers, long esteemed, who have been on this committee for years, resigned in protest.

One of the op-eds that ran in the *Washington Post* was coauthored by Dr. Paul Offitt, a professor of pediatrics and director of the Vaccine Education Center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Once again—not an opponent of vaccines; a proponent of vaccines, a guy who has been on the vaccine committee for decades.

As a Member of the FDA's advisory committee, Dr. Offitt, though, did not support widespread boosting when the committee met to consider boosters for all adults in September and October. He and the two former FDA officials wrote: "A healthy young person with two mRNA doses is extremely unlikely to be hospitalized with COVID, so the case for risking any side effects," the case for forcing them to take a third vaccine when their risk of COVID after two vaccines is nearly, if not virtually, zero, he says—or they said that the case for risking any side effects—such as myocarditis—diminishes substantially.

What happens is myocarditis is a rare event for vaccines, more common with young adolescent males. But you have to compare the risk of getting myocarditis with the vaccine to the risk of the disease. Young people who have been vaccinated twice—even without vaccines, young people, the death rate under 15 is 1 in 2.32 million. With the vaccine it is probably zero. We have studies of millions of people. We can't find kids that are dying or going to the hospital with two vaccines. And yet the policy for pages in this body is a booster—a mandated booster. It is actually malpractice. It is malpractice to give a booster, a third vaccine, to an adolescent male and probably to an adolescent female. There is no evidence it helps them.

Then the other argument goes like this: Oh, we don't want them to transmit it to people. Guess what? We have done a study on that, too. Vaccinated versus unvaccinated: 25 percent of the household will transmit it. It is the same for both groups. The vaccine protects you from hospitalization and death. It does not prevent transmission.

So we are going to vaccinate these kids to take care of the old folks in the Senate. It is not true. And they have already been vaccinated twice. The third vaccine—there is no scientific evidence. There is, however, evidence that it is a danger to them. And to ignore that danger, to be supportive of force I think is without question the wrong way to go.

In January, a piece in *The Atlantic* cited Dr. Offitt—once again, a vaccine supporter who has been part of the vaccine committee with the FDA for decades—as saying this:

Getting boosted would not be worth the risk for the average healthy 17-year-old boy.

This is coming from an advocate of vaccines—not a denier, not someone who hasn't been vaccinated. His son has been vaccinated, I believe, twice. But he said he wouldn't do it for a 17-year-old. In fact, he advised his son publicly, who is in his early 20s, not to get the third dose.

What if I am wrong? What if Dr. Offitt is wrong? I don't know. What if it is a controversy? Wouldn't we allow it, maybe, in a free society, up to free individuals consulting with their parents whether you want to get them? But, no. Everything is about force. Everything is about mandates. Do as I am told, even when the science doesn't support it—even when the science is arguable. Do it or we will fire you. Do it or we will send you home. I think it is a terrible example and, coming from the Senate, an awful precedent.

The *Chicago Thinker* is a paper for the University of Chicago, and the students there put it in a January 11 editorial. These are the kids who are being forced to do boosters as well:

If being “boosted” becomes a prerequisite for participation in normal life, the vaccine's diminishing efficacy means the booster campaign will never end.

See, we know this. This is the truth of the matter. While the vaccine does help you to prevent hospitalization and death, we know it has diminishing efficacy, meaning that it wears off, so you have to keep getting boosted and boosted and boosted. But shouldn't we at least study it? Shouldn't we be honest with these kids in that their death rate is virtually zero with nothing? If you vaccinate them, it is zero, and then we have just got to keep vaccinating them. Just do as you are told. Submit to the State. Do whatever people tell you despite the science; despite three scientists from the FDA's vaccine committee saying it is not warranted; despite people arguing that it is actually malpractice and puts these young people at risk to make them get a third vaccine.

In December, Dr. Marty Makary, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*:

The U.S. government is pushing Covid-19 vaccine boosters for 16- and 17-year-olds without supporting clinical data. A large Israeli population study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* earlier this month, found that the risk of COVID death in people under 30 with two vaccine shots was zero.

The risk of death is zero, and we are forcing them to get a third shot for which we know, from large, million-person studies, there is a side effect of heart inflammation.

Even World Health Organization Chief Scientist Dr. Soumya Swaminathan said in January that there is no evidence right now that suggests healthy children and adolescents need booster shots.

So most of Europe has actually said don't take it because of the risk of myocarditis, and the head of the WHO says there is no health reason for which to do it. Yet the Senate thinks it is smart enough to mandate these kids. God forbid one of them dies. God forbid one of them gets myocarditis.

Dr. Martin Kulldorff, an epidemiologist from Harvard Medical School, says that mandating people who have already had COVID to still get vaccinated “makes zero sense from a scientific point of view, and it makes zero sense from a public health point of view.”

Furthermore, we now know the CDC released that, under age 11, 75 percent of the kids have already had it. So, in the age category of the pages and a little older than that, we are looking at a 70- to 75-percent chance they have already had it; they have already been vaccinated; their chance of death is zero. Yet it is not enough. They must submit—submit to the man; submit to the woman; submit to the State.

The science isn't there. It is all about submission.

Then we have weak lapdogs who just say: Go ahead and force them. We don't care. It is not very likely they will die. It is only a few out of 100,000 we may lose.

A study in *The Lancet* last September supported this view, stating:

Current evidence does not . . . appear to show a need for boosting in the general population.

This is not just in kids. This is in *The Lancet*, saying there isn't evidence for boosting in the general population.

What has been accepted by most people is that boosting for those at risk—those of age, those with obesity, those with, you know, other risk factors—is not an unreasonable thing. For most of the people our age and older, the vaccine, without question, is safer than the disease, but the disease is so rare, so uneventful, and the death rate so low in children that you need a near-perfect vaccine to say: Take the vaccine versus the disease.

Even then, wouldn't you want to know if they had had it? Wouldn't we want the CDC to release, if you have had COVID or if you have had COVID and have been vaccinated, what your chances are of going to the hospital?

They actually did look at this for a large population study, and they found that, if you were vaccinated versus unvaccinated, you were 20 times less likely to go to the hospital. I still believe that to be true, and I think it is for the overall population. It is probably not measurable for kids because kids aren't largely affected by this.

Do you know what they also measured? They measured unvaccinated versus the unvaccinated who have had COVID—and guess what. You were 55 times less likely to go to the hospital. The disease is an incredibly potent source of immunity. If you have been vaccinated and had the disease, I think you would calculate that in.

Do you just blindly submit and just take 100 vaccines and take it every 6 months or would you want to talk to your doctor and say: Well, I had COVID in January, and I have had two vaccines. I am relatively thin and relatively healthy. What do you think?

Wouldn't there be a decision-making process?

When we are talking to children—the young men and women at the ages of 15 and 16 years old, many of whom have had COVID already and have already had vaccines—wouldn't we want them to be part of the decision making?

Wouldn't we say: What do your parents think?

Wouldn't we ask for parental consent?

This is insane what we are doing. We have taken off on a tangent where things that were once private decisions are now the realm of the State.

In the study in *The Lancet*, they stated that the “[c]urrent evidence does not . . . appear to show a need for boosting in the general population, in which efficacy against severe disease remains high,” and “currently available evidence”—this is also from *The Lancet*—“does not show the need for widespread use of booster vaccination in populations that have received an effective primary regimen.”

So here we have a not insubstantial journal, *The Lancet*. Now, you can disagree. You can disagree with the *New England Journal of Medicine*. You can disagree with *The Lancet*, but for goodness' sake, wouldn't you at least admit that it is an argument and that when there is an argument that has valid facts on both sides of it that maybe the individual ought to get to decide?

The *Lancet* says:

Currently available evidence does not show the need for widespread booster vaccination in populations that have received an effective primary vaccination regimen.

There is absolutely no clinical data to support other than a bunch of bureaucrats who want to command you. There is no clinical data to say that 15- and 16-year-olds ought to get a booster—zero.

When we consider the rules for pages, we ought to ask: Will these policies be expected to continue indefinitely? And, if so, to what end? based on what data? When will they change?

We have got them in here wearing masks. The Vice President doesn't wear a mask when she is exposed. Look across all the pages of the news. Everybody has been exposed. I think we have had 8 to 10 Senators who have had COVID in the last couple of weeks. Do you think everybody who ran into them wore a mask for 2 weeks? No, nobody is doing it. Nobody is paying any attention to these people, but the pages are stuck under the thumb of these public health czars.

When we consider the rules, we ought to ask: When will this end?

When it comes to vaccines, though, they can benefit the vaccinated person, but it doesn't stop transmission. The best data we have comes from Denmark, where vaccines were not shown to have any impact on household viral transmission or the secondary attack rate. In other words, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, they both transmitted the disease equally.

It is no coincidence that the Scandinavian countries have moved on to a targeted testing and treatment regime. They are no longer just saying for everybody to submit and for everybody to do the same thing. They are targeting the disease and those who are at risk. They don't expect people to live in a state of constant fear under an endless public health emergency. Instead, public health officials issue recommendations about how those at risk can protect themselves. They give advice.

There was a time in the history of our country when public health officials gave advice, not dictates or mandates. Realize the policy we are adhering to is the same policy that Dr. Fauci espouses, and you know what his response was.

When the court struck down the mask mandate on planes, do you know what Dr. Fauci had the audacity to say? He said: How dare the courts involve themselves in public health. We are not smart enough. Nobody outside the realm of Dr. Fauci is smart enough,

but how dare the courts or the Constitution adjudicate what is individual liberty, what is the responsibility of government, and whether the CDC has the power to have mask mandates—none of this.

How dare they? That was his response.

Some offered a different approach. Some offered a more targeted approach to this. It is what Dr. Scott Atlas called for when he was at the White House in the last administration, but his voice was deliberately drowned out by Dr. Fauci and others who attempted to govern by stick rather than carrot.

Public health measures should be backed up with proof that the benefits outweigh the burdens. There is no evidence of that when it comes to vaccination mandates, especially for teenagers, who as a group are less vulnerable to this virus than any Senator. That is why I am asking unanimous consent that the Senate pass my resolution to end all COVID mandates for pages and respect their privacy, their rights, their medical freedom, and their health for the young men and women who serve in this Chamber.

Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 631, which is at the desk. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, in reserving the right to object, my colleague Senator PAUL is well-intended in this recommendation, and I listened to it carefully, as I am sure others did.

The Page Program, which has been in effect since 1829, has become a program of both opportunity and education and is a program that the Page Board, the Senate Page Board, has responsibility for.

I would say, in looking at the immediate future, the pages who are here now, the pages who have agreed to be pages in the summer, and the pages, I think, who are in line to be pages in the fall—and their families—have all looked at these recommendations. They have all decided they are recommendations they would be able to meet. Maybe more importantly, they also have decided to make that family decision for their children to be here and be pages as high school juniors, perhaps, because of the standards that have been set that they are well aware of.

I would hope that Senator PAUL would continue to talk to the Page Board. I think the Page Board has a very important job to do. They accept an incredible responsibility of the relationships that they have decided to enter into between the pages, their families, and the Page Board in representing the Senate.

That Board has some oversight from the Rules Committee, and I yield to the chairman of the Rules Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I thank Senator BLUNT for his statement.

I join him in opposing this resolution.

As chair of the Rules Committee, with oversight of the Sergeant at Arms who helps manage the Senate Page Program, I know, like Senator BLUNT does and everyone here does—I see Senator LEAHY is here, the Presiding Officer, and Senator PAUL—how hard the dedicated pages, who come from States across the country, work to help us do our jobs here on the Senate floor. We are so excited when we have someone from our States come and join us as a page. They are, too, as are their families.

As we continue to reopen the Capitol, which I strongly support, we must also take into account the health and safety of everyone who works and visits here, including our pages. This resolution would reverse the Page Program's—as Senator BLUNT noted—current policy and prohibit any requirement for pages to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

It would also prohibit requiring pages to undergo COVID testing or wear a mask regardless of guidance from the Office of the Attending Physician or the CDC. This includes reversing the policy that all pages must wear a mask if one tests positive—a commonplace rule to protect healthy pages, who all live in the same dormitory, which, I think, is the defining part of this.

In light of recent events, we know that staff, Senators, as well as pages, have tested positive in the past few weeks. In light of these recent events, the Attending Physician, Dr. Monahan, has recommended that all pages wear masks. I believe in science. I believe we should listen to Dr. Monahan. Local public health officials have also decided, by the way, to require vaccines for certain eligible students in Washington, DC, including those attending our page school here in the Senate.

I agree with Senator BLUNT in that the Page Program needs flexibility to set its own policies to protect the health and safety of pages. We should not put these young people who have come here to work in the heart of our democracy at risk unnecessarily.

We all know that the vaccine helps greatly if someone gets sick. I know that because my husband got really sick before there was a vaccine. He is healthy, and he ended up in the hospital for a week on oxygen. That might shape my response here, but I believe that if he had had the vaccine, we wouldn't have come that close to losing him.

I believe in science. And so I join Senator BLUNT in this objection. And we look forward to seeing these pages and many pages serve us well in the coming years; therefore, I object.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge.

Mr. LEAHY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 50, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 174 Ex.)

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—50

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. On this vote, the yeas are 50 and the nays are 50.

The Senate being equally divided, the Vice President votes in the affirmative, and the motion is agreed to.

The nomination is discharged and will be placed on the calendar.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now vote on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 718, the nomination of Susan Grundmann, as provided under the previous order, and that following disposition of that nomination, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the Powell nomination and at 1:45 p.m., vote on confirmation of the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the

Grundmann nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Susan Tsui Grundmann, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 1, 2025.

VOTE ON GRUNDMANN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Grundmann nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

(Rollcall Vote No. 175 Ex.)

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Lujan	Sinema
Carper	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—49

Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blunt	Hagerty	Rounds
Boozman	Hawley	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Johnson	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Lummis	Toomey
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Portman	

NOT VOTING—1

Leahy

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the Powell nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Re-

serve System for a term of four years. (Reappointment)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks, which will be brief.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

U.S. FEDERAL RESERVE NOMINATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, since President Biden took office, we have made tremendous economic progress as a country. Our economic growth last year exceeded that of China's for the first time in 20 years, and Federal Reserve nominees who have come before the Senate are crucial to continuing that progress. As Americans face rising prices caused by corporate greed, a global pandemic, and Putin's war, having a full Federal Reserve Board has never been more vital.

A few weeks ago, the Senate confirmed Lael Brainard to be Vice Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Vice Chair Brainard has served as a member of the Federal Reserve since 2014, when she led bipartisan action to support families through the COVID-19 economic crisis and worked to create a better payments system that works for consumers and small banks. She has championed efforts to modernize and strengthen the Community Reinvestment Act, a landmark civil rights law to start to undo the dark legacy brought on by Jim Crow and, ultimately, redlining. We saw her tremendous efforts pay off. Last week, all three Federal banking Agencies moved forward with their new, historic CRA proposal.

Earlier this week, Democrats supported the historic nomination of Dr. Lisa Cook, who is a prominent economist with years of research and international experience on monetary policy, banking, and financial crises. She is the first Black woman to serve on the Board of Governors in the 109-year history of the Federal Reserve. She has seen how economic policy affects all kinds of people in different parts of the country, from the rural South where she grew up in Milledgeville, GA, to the industrial Midwest at Michigan State University—one of the great Midwestern State universities of this country—where she built her career.

Dr. Cook is a Spelman College alumna. She was a Marshall Scholar and a Truman Scholar. She studied at Oxford University. She earned her Ph.D. in economics at Berkeley. She is a tenured professor of economics and international relations at Michigan State.

Last night, the Senate confirmed Dr. Philip Jefferson, one of the country's leading thinkers on the economics of poverty. He will be a critical voice on the Fed. He is the vice president for academic affairs, dean of faculty, and Freeland professor of economics at Davidson College. He began his career as a Fed economist. He grew up, as he